

Message Text

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TAGS: PFOR, IN, US

SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTER DENIES TONING DOWN CRITICISM OF
DIEGO GARCIA

1. THE JANA SANGH SPOKESMAN ASKED IN THE RAJYA SABHA (UPPER HOUSE) DECEMBER 20 ABOUT THE VIEW IMPLICITLY ATTRIBUTED TO AMBASSADOR MOYNIHAN (IN THE WASHINGTON POST) THAT INDIA HAD MUTED ITS PROTESTS OVER DIEGO GARCIA. HE ALSO ASKED ABOUT AMBASSADOR DESIGNATE SAXBE'S STATEMENT IN HIS CONFIRMATION HEARING THAT INDIA'S OPPOSITION TO DIEGO GARCIA "IS NOT AS GREAT AS IT ONCE WAS." THE DEPUTY MINISTER HAD EARLIER SAID THAT INDIA AND THE US HAD "AGREED TO DISAGREE" ON DIEGO GARCIA, BUT THE FOREIGN MINISTER STOOD UP TO ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS. CHAVAN SAID THAT THERE WAS NO QUESTION OF "TONING DOWN" INDIAN CRITICISM. INDIAN POLICY ON DIEGO GARCIA AND ON THE INDIA OCEAN WAS "SOMETHING FUNDAMENTAL AND THERE IS NO QUESTION OF GIVING ANY INDIRECT ASSURANCE ON THIS," HE ADDED. AS FAR AS INDIA'S POLICY WAS CONCERNED, IT WAS INDIA'S OWN CONCERN AND ONLY INDIAN COULD SPEAK ABOUT IT, HE SAID.

2. EARLIER, DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER BIPIN PAL DAS SAID THAT THE DOUBTS INDIAN AMBASSADOR KAUL HAD EXPRESSED IN HIS U. S. RADIO-TV INTERVIEW ABOUT IMPROVEMENT OF INDO-AMERICAN RELATIONS STEMMED FROM DELAY IN HOLDING MEETINGS OF THE THREE SUB-COMMISSIONS (SIC.) THE SIGNING OF THE JOINT COMMISSION
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AGREEMENT WAS THE MAJOR OUTCOME OF DR. KISSINGER'S VISIT, DAS SAID. KAUL'S STATEMENT HAD BEEN DIRECTED IN PART AT THOSE IN THE US WHO OPPOSED IMPROVEMENT IN INDO-US RELATIONS, ACCORDING TO DAS. FOREIGN MINISTER CHAVAN SAT THROUGH ALL OF THIS BUT DID NOT INTERVENE.

3. CHAVAN DID RISE, HOWEVER, TO DEFEND AMBASSADOR KAUL FROM AN ATTACK BY PRO-MOSCOW COMMUNIST LEADER BUPESH GUPTA. GUPTA CHARGED THAT KAUL HAD PREVIOUSLY BE TOO PRO-US. GUPTA ALLEGED THAT KAUL HAD BEEN REPRIMANDED BY THE FOREIGN MINISTRY FOR HIS REPORTED STATEMENT THAT THE GOI WAS NOT AWARE OF ANY CIA ACTIVITIES IN INDIA. GUPTA SAW KAUL'S STATEMENT EXPRESSING DOUBTS AS AN INDICATION HE WAS NOW GETTING DISILLUSIONED WITH THE U. S. CHAVAN REPLIED THAT KAUL WAS WORKING IN THE BEST INTEREST OF INDIA.

4. FOR WHAT IT IS WORTH, I WAS TOLD AT THE TIME BY THE PRIME MINISTER'S SECRETARY THAT KAUL HAD BEEN SENT A "FCCKET" FOR HIS STATEMENT ABOUT CIA. THIS BY THE PRIME MINISTER, RATHER THAN THE FOREIGN MINISTER. WHAT HE ACTUALLY SAID WAS THAT INDIA COULD HANDLE ANY ATTEMPTED INTER-FERENCE. I WAS SWORN TO SECRECY IN THE MATTER, BUT OBVIOUSLY WORD HAS GOT TO GUPTA. THE COMMUNISTS ARE EVERYWHERE IN THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA AND IN MY EXPERIENCE LITTLE ESCAPES

THEM WHERE THE UNITED STATES IS CONCERNED.
MOYNIHAN

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